

WEST LAFAYETTE POLICE MERIT COMMISSION MINUTES  
November 14, 2011

The West Lafayette Police Merit Commission met in regular session in the Lower Level Conference Room of City Hall on November 14, 2011, at 7:00 p.m.

Commission President Leverenz called the meeting to order and presided.

PRESENT: Commissioners Corrigan, Kirkpatrick, Leverenz, and No.

ABSENT: Commissioner Troyer.

ALSO PRESENT: Commission Attorney Brooks, Police Chief Dombkowski, and Dr. James LeBreton, Associate Professor, Department of Psychological Sciences, Purdue University.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Corrigan moved to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2011, regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kirkpatrick. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS

Promotion Exams

Commission President Leverenz stated that there was concern that scores on the recent promotion exams were lower than the Merit Commission thought they should be. Dr. LeBreton was invited to come and discuss this matter. Dr. LeBreton said that there are at least three reasons for low scores on tests. First, the content may be bad, deficient in some way or contaminated in that it is not measuring the things it is supposed to. Dr. LeBreton said that he is reasonably confident that the reason for the lower scores is not this, as the process to develop the exam questions is content valid, with thorough reviews of each of the questions. A second reason could be that the items are unreasonably difficult. The third reason could be that the test-takers did not prepare. It is possible that the questions could be difficult and the test-takers did not prepare. Dr. LeBreton explained that he reviewed the 60 questions on the Sergeant's exam, and looked at which questions were missed. There were seven exams given, and two questions that six of seven got wrong. Five of seven got four items wrong. There were 20 to 25 questions that everyone got correct. The pool of test-takers is so small that further analysis is not likely to be meaningful. He said that he thinks the test bank content is reasonable, given the feedback he has received. The scores should not be framed in the 90-is-an-A, 80-is-a-B, etc. The scores should be viewed as absolute, then compare people based upon those scores. The test was identical to the test administered last year. A few items were modified, based upon changes to the SOP, the PMC Rules & Regulations, and the Criminal Code. The impact of those changes on the questions on the exam was small.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick said she thought that the questions that six of seven got wrong and five of seven got wrong should be shown to the Captains. The Captains should think about whether the questions were hard or tricky or what other issues might have been working. Dr. LeBreton said that he would do that.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick said that she had given the promotion tests twice now, and she is concerned about what she sees as a lack of seriousness of the test-takers. The first time she gave the test, she said, was by herself. Four people took the two different exams. She was startled to learn that none of the four had studied for the exam. The most recent time, she and Commissioner Corrigan gave the test. There were seven people tested, and she had the same feeling. In her opinion, the scores indicated that they had not studied. There were scores at 50%. She feels that

people who miss half the questions, she does not consider that even close to passing. Police Chief Dombkowski noted that several people scored well over 50%.

Police Chief Dombkowski said that he is most concerned with judgment, not necessarily high scores.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick said that they should be tested on the body of knowledge they are expected to know.

Commission President Leverenz said that some questions are written in such a way that some test-takers think too much. Additionally, the exam score, along with the performance ratings, longevity, and interviews, are all taken together to consider promotions. The tests do spread the scores out somewhat.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick said that she is most troubled by what she perceives as the cavalier attitudes of those taking the tests.

Merit Commission President Leverenz asked if the test-takers see promotions coming up; that could also affect scores. Police Chief Dombkowski answered that they probably do not.

Police Chief Dombkowski said that Mayor Dennis is considering an appointment for Deputy Chief this year. If that happens, there may be promotions made to fill vacancies. That may happen closer to the first of the year. He asked the Merit Commission when lists would be ready, so that he could hit the ground running. Commission President Leverenz said that he and Counsel Brooks need to verify that the lists are correct.

#### Eligibility Lists

Commission President Leverenz said that there is no Captains list. There are lists for Lieutenant and Sergeant. There was discussion about eligibility lists.

Merit Commission President Leverenz asked in what order the lists should be created. Police Chief Dombkowski said Captain, Lieutenant, and Sergeant. There is currently one extra Sergeant who is serving as a Lieutenant, so the Sergeant list is not urgent. Commission President Leverenz asked Chief Dombkowski to prepare the performance reports summary for each of those eligible for promotion. The scoring for the list ranking is 30% exam, performance is 40%, longevity is 10%, and the interview is 20%.

Commissioner Corrigan said that he would develop the questions for the Captain interviews. Commission President Leverenz said he would forward the questions for the other interviews.

The interviews for Captain and Lieutenant will be December 6 at 6:30 p.m. in Executive Session.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

##### 2012 Police Merit Commission Meeting Schedule

Commission President Leverenz distributed the proposed 2012 PMC meeting schedule. Commissioner Kirkpatrick moved to accept the schedule. The motion was seconded by Commissioner No. The vote was AYE unanimously.

##### Discipline for Officer Max

Commission President Leverenz said that Police Chief Dombkowski had issued a letter of reprimand was issued to Officer Max. Commissioners received that document earlier.

Chief's Report

Police Chief Dombkowski distributed copies of the October Police Department report to the Council and reviewed items in the report.

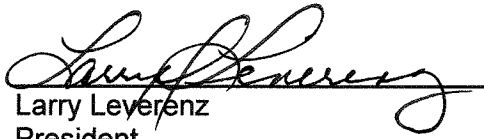
NEXT MEETING


December 6, 2011, 6:30 p.m. – Executive Session

December 12, 2011, at 7:00 p.m. – Regular Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kirkpatrick moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Corrigan. Commission President Leverenz adjourned the meeting, the time being 7:53 p.m.

  
Larry Leverenz  
President

  
Bob Troyer  
Secretary